

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1- 36 (Cancelled)

37. (Cancelled)

38. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim ~~[[37]]~~ 71, comprising the further step of:

introducing an adhesive between the panel and at least one of the sidewalls of the panel joining member.

39. (Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 38, comprising the further step of:

substantially tightening said fastener and forming an adhesive bond weld between the panel and the sidewall of the panel joining member when the fastener has been tightened substantially.

40. (Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 71, wherein the fastener is an expanding rivet fastener to enable it to engage the panel tightly.

41. (Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 71, wherein the fastener has a screw-thread to engage at least one of said panel and said panel joining member.

42. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim ~~[[37]]~~ 71, wherein the receiver is an adapter, the adapter having a shape complementary to that of the fastener-receiving cavity.

43.(Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 71, wherein the fastener-receiving cavity has an open end and narrows away from its open end.

44.(Currently Amended) The method according to Claim ~~[[37]]~~ 71, additionally including the step of introducing said fastener into the receiver at an angle inclined to the axis perpendicular to the surface of the panel.

45. (Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 71, wherein the panel includes at least one projection to engage a corresponding recess in a panel joining member thereby forming a push-fit type joint.

46.(Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 71, wherein opposing sidewalls of the panel joining member are inclined together at an angle of up to 5°.

47. (Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 46, wherein the incline angle is from 0.7° to 2° .

48. - 58. (Cancelled)

59. (Currently Amended) The panel joint according to Claim ~~[[58]]~~ 70, wherein the opening includes a narrowing at its closed end to grip the end of a fastener.

60. (Previously Amended) The panel joint according to Claim 59, wherein the opening and the narrowing are cylindrical.

61. (Previously Amended) The panel joint according to Claim 60, wherein the cylindrical opening and the narrowing are co-axial.

62. (Cancelled)

63. (Previously Amended) The panel joint according to Claim 70, further comprising:
an adhesive disposed between the panel and at least one sidewall of the panel joining member to increase the strength of the joint.

64. (Previously Amended) The panel joint according to Claim 70, further comprising:
an adapter having an open end located in said fastener-receiving cavity, the adapter having a shape complementary to that of said fastener-receiving cavity.

65. (Previously Amended) The panel joint according to Claim 63, further comprising:
an adapter located in said fastener-receiving cavity, the adapter having a shape complementary to that of said fastener-receiving cavity.

66. (Previously Amended) The panel joint according to Claim 64, wherein the adapter narrows away from its open end to ensure that the material from which the adapter is formed undergoes plastic flow around the fastening member as the fastening member is fully engaged.

67. (Previously Amended) The panel joint according to Claim 70, wherein said fastener includes a screw thread to engage the panel joining member.

68. (Cancelled)

69. (Previously Amended) The panel joint according to Claim 70, wherein said fastener is aligned along an axis which is at an angle inclined to the axis perpendicular to the surface of the panel.

70. (Currently Amended) A panel joint, comprising:

a panel having an inner surface, an outer surface, at least one end and a fastener-receiving cavity formed within said panel which opens onto said inner surface, generally adjacent to said one end of said panel;

a panel joining member having opposed, spaced-apart inner and outer sidewalls which define therebetween a panel-receiving cavity for receipt therein of said one end of said panel, said inner sidewall of said panel joining member having an aperture formed therethrough which is positioned to align with said fastener-receiving cavity when said one end of said panel is received with said panel-receiving cavity;

at least one stop member formed on said panel joining member adjacent to said panel-receiving cavity against which said one end of said panel abuts when fully inserted into said panel-receiving cavity; [[and]]

a screw-threaded fastener removably insertable through said aperture of said inner sidewall of said panel joining member and into said fastener-receiving cavity to enable said fastener to engage said panel and urge the outer surface of said panel against the outer sidewall of said panel joining member, said fastener-receiving cavity including an aperture to receive a nut into which said fastener can be screwed, the panel joining member and the nut cooperatively engaging to lock the nut against the inner sidewall of the panel joining member[[]]; and

an adapter to receive said fastener and for insertion into said fastener-receiving cavity, the adapter comprising an opening having an open end having a mouth and a

closed end, to receive said fastener, the mouth of the opening having a diameter greater than that of said fastener.

71. (Currently Amended) In a method of connecting a panel to a panel joining member employing a panel assembly of the type comprising, a panel having an inner surface, an outer surface, and at least one end, a panel joining member having opposed, spaced-apart inner and outer sidewalls which define therebetween a panel-receiving cavity, said inner sidewall of said panel joining member having an aperture formed therethrough,

at least one stop member formed on said panel joining member adjacent to said panel-receiving cavity, and a fastener including a screw-thread, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a fastener-receiving cavity within said panel which opens onto said inner surface, generally adjacent to said one end of said panel;

inserting a receiver into said fastener-receiving cavity;

forming an aperture in the open end of said fastener receiving cavity and inserting said one end of said panel into said panel-receiving cavity of said panel joining member;

abutting said one end of said panel against said one stop member and aligning said fastener-receiving cavity of said panel with said aperture of said inner sidewall of said panel joining member; and

inserting said fastener through said aperture of said inner sidewall of said panel joining member and screwing the fastener into ~~[[the]]~~ a nut and into said fastener-receiving cavity of said panel to enable said fastener to engage said panel and urge the outer surface of said panel against the outer sidewall of said panel joining member, the nut and the panel joining member ~~[[is]]~~ operating to lock the nut against the inner sidewall of the panel joining member.

72. (Cancelled)

73. (New) A panel joint, comprising:

a panel having an inner surface, an outer surface, at least one end and a fastener-receiving cavity formed within said panel which opens onto said inner surface, generally adjacent to said one end of said panel;

a panel joining member having opposed, spaced-apart inner and outer sidewalls which define therebetween a panel-receiving cavity for receipt therein of said one end of said panel, said inner sidewall of said panel joining member having an aperture formed therethrough which is positioned to align with said fastener-receiving cavity when said one end of said panel is received with said panel-receiving cavity;

at least one stop member formed on said panel joining member adjacent to said panel-receiving cavity against which said one end of said panel abuts when fully inserted into said panel-receiving cavity;

a screw-threaded fastener removably insertable through said aperture of said inner sidewall of said panel joining member and into said fastener-receiving cavity to enable said fastener to engage said panel and urge the outer surface of said panel against the outer sidewall of said panel joining member, said fastener-receiving cavity including an aperture to receive a nut into which said fastener can be screwed, the panel joining member and the nut cooperatively engaging to lock the nut against the inner sidewall of the panel joining member; and

an adapter having an open end located in said fastener-receiving cavity, the adapter having a shape complementary to that of said fastener-receiving cavity.

74. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 73, further comprising:

an adapter to receive said fastener and for insertion into said fastener-receiving cavity, the adapter comprising an opening having an open end having a mouth and a closed end, to receive said fastener, the mouth of the opening having a diameter greater than that of said fastener.

75. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 74, wherein the opening includes a narrowing at its closed end to grip the end of a fastener.

76. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 75, wherein the opening and the narrowing are cylindrical.

77. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 76, wherein the cylindrical opening and the narrowing are co-axial.

78. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 73, further comprising:

an adhesive disposed between the panel and at least one sidewall of the panel joining member to increase the strength of the joint.

79. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 78, further comprising:

an adapter located in said fastener-receiving cavity, the adapter having a shape complementary to that of said fastener-receiving cavity.

80. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 73, wherein the adapter narrows away from its open end to ensure that the material from which the adapter is formed undergoes plastic flow around the fastening member as the fastening member is fully engaged.

81. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 73, wherein said fastener includes a screw thread to engage the panel joining member.

82. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 73, wherein said fastener is aligned along an axis which is at an angle inclined to the axis perpendicular to the surface of the panel.

83. (New) A panel joint, comprising:

- a panel having an inner surface, an outer surface, at least one end and a fastener-receiving cavity formed within said panel which opens onto said inner surface, generally adjacent to said one end of said panel;

- a panel joining member having opposed, spaced-apart inner and outer sidewalls which define therebetween a panel-receiving cavity for receipt therein of said one end of said panel, said inner sidewall of said panel joining member having an aperture formed therethrough which is positioned to align with said fastener-receiving cavity when said one end of said panel is received with said panel-receiving cavity;

- at least one stop member formed on said panel joining member adjacent to said panel-receiving cavity against which said one end of said panel abuts when fully inserted into said panel-receiving cavity;

- a screw-threaded fastener removably insertable through said aperture of said inner sidewall of said panel joining member and into said fastener-receiving cavity to enable said fastener to engage said panel and urge the outer surface of said panel against the outer sidewall of said panel joining member, said fastener-receiving cavity including an aperture to receive a nut into which said fastener can be screwed, the

panel joining member and the nut cooperatively engaging to lock the nut against the inner sidewall of the panel joining member;

an adapter located in said fastener-receiving cavity, the adapter having a shape complementary to that of said fastener-receiving cavity; and

an adhesive disposed between the panel and at least one sidewall of the panel joining member to increase the strength of the joint.

84. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 83, further comprising:

an adapter to receive said fastener and for insertion into said fastener-receiving cavity, the adapter comprising an opening having an open end having a mouth and a closed end, to receive said fastener, the mouth of the opening having a diameter greater than that of said fastener.

85. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 84, wherein the opening includes a narrowing at its closed end to grip the end of a fastener.

86. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 85, wherein the opening and the narrowing are cylindrical.

87. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 86, wherein the cylindrical opening and the narrowing are co-axial.

88. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 83, further comprising:

an adapter having an open end located in said fastener-receiving cavity, the adapter having a shape complementary to that of said fastener-receiving cavity.

89. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 88, wherein the adapter narrows away from its open end to ensure that the material from which the adapter is formed undergoes plastic flow around the fastening member as the fastening member is fully engaged.

90. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 83, wherein said fastener includes a screw thread to engage the panel joining member.

91. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 83, wherein said fastener is aligned along an axis which is at an angle inclined to the axis perpendicular to the surface of the panel.

92. (New) A panel joint, comprising:

a panel having an inner surface, an outer surface, at least one end and a fastener-receiving cavity formed within said panel which opens onto said inner surface, generally adjacent to said one end of said panel;

a panel joining member having opposed, spaced-apart inner and outer sidewalls which define therebetween a panel-receiving cavity for receipt therein of said one end of said panel, said inner sidewall of said panel joining member having an aperture formed therethrough which is positioned to align with said fastener-receiving cavity when said one end of said panel is received with said panel-receiving cavity;

at least one stop member formed on said panel joining member adjacent to said panel-receiving cavity against which said one end of said panel abuts when fully inserted into said panel-receiving cavity; and

a screw-threaded fastener removably insertable through said aperture of said inner sidewall of said panel joining member and into said fastener-receiving cavity to enable said fastener to engage said panel and urge the outer surface of said panel against the outer sidewall of said panel joining member, said fastener-receiving cavity including an aperture to receive a nut into which said fastener can be screwed, the panel joining member and the nut cooperatively engaging to lock the nut against the inner sidewall of the panel joining member, and wherein said fastener is aligned along an axis which is at an angle inclined to the axis perpendicular to the surface of the panel.

93. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 92, further comprising:

an adapter to receive said fastener and for insertion into said fastener-receiving cavity, the adapter comprising an opening having an open end having a mouth and a

closed end, to receive said fastener, the mouth of the opening having a diameter greater than that of said fastener.

94. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 93, wherein the opening includes a narrowing at its closed end to grip the end of a fastener.

95. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 94, wherein the opening and the narrowing are cylindrical.

96. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 95, wherein the cylindrical opening and the narrowing are co-axial.

97. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 92, further comprising:

an adhesive disposed between the panel and at least one sidewall of the panel joining member to increase the strength of the joint.

98. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 92, further comprising:

an adapter having an open end located in said fastener-receiving cavity, the adapter having a shape complementary to that of said fastener-receiving cavity.

99. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 97, further comprising:

an adapter located in said fastener-receiving cavity, the adapter having a shape complementary to that of said fastener-receiving cavity.

100. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 98, wherein the adapter narrows away from its open end to ensure that the material from which the adapter is formed undergoes plastic flow around the fastening member as the fastening member is fully engaged.

101. (New) The panel joint according to Claim 92, wherein said fastener includes a screw thread to engage the panel joining member.

102. (New) In a method of connecting a panel to a panel joining member employing a panel assembly of the type comprising, a panel having an inner surface, an outer surface, and at least one end, a panel joining member having opposed, spaced-apart inner and outer sidewalls which define therebetween a panel-receiving cavity, said inner sidewall of said panel joining member having an aperture formed therethrough, at least one stop member formed on said panel joining member adjacent to said panel-receiving cavity, and a fastener including a screw-thread, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a fastener-receiving cavity within said panel which opens onto said inner surface, generally adjacent to said one end of said panel, wherein the fastener-receiving cavity has an open end and narrows away from its open end;

forming an aperture in the open end of said fastener receiving cavity and inserting said one end of said panel into said panel-receiving cavity of said panel joining member;

abutting said one end of said panel against said one stop member and aligning said fastener-receiving cavity of said panel with said aperture of said inner sidewall of said panel joining member; and

inserting said fastener through said aperture of said inner sidewall of said panel joining member and screwing the fastener into a nut and into said fastener-receiving cavity of said panel to enable said fastener to engage said panel and urge the outer surface of said panel against the outer sidewall of said panel joining member, the nut and the panel joining member operating to lock the nut against the inner sidewall of the panel joining member.

103. (New) The method according to Claim 102, comprising the further step of:

inserting a receiver into said fastener-receiving cavity prior to the panel being inserted within the panel joining member.

104. (New) The method according to Claim 103, comprising the further step of:
introducing an adhesive between the panel and at least one of the sidewalls of
the panel joining member.
105. (New) The method according to Claim 104, comprising the further step of:
substantially tightening said fastener and forming an adhesive bond weld
between the panel and the sidewall of the panel joining member when the fastener has
been tightened substantially.
106. (New) The method according to Claim 102, wherein the fastener is an expanding
rivet fastener to enable it to engage the panel tightly.
107. (New) The method according to Claim 102, wherein the fastener has a screw-
thread to engage at least one of said panel and said panel joining member.
108. (New) The method according to Claim 103, wherein the receiver is an adapter,
the adapter having a shape complementary to that of the fastener-receiving cavity.
109. (New) The method according to Claim 103, additionally including the step of
introducing said fastener into the receiver at an angle inclined to the axis perpendicular
to the surface of the panel.

110. (New) The method according to Claim 102, wherein the panel includes at least one projection to engage a corresponding recess in a panel joining member thereby forming a push-fit type joint.

111. (New) The method according to Claim 102, wherein opposing sidewalls of the panel joining member are inclined together at an angle of up to 5° .

112. (New) The method according to Claim 111, wherein the incline angle is from 0.7° to 2° .